

WIPP Quick Facts

(As of 03-22-06)

4,423

Shipments received since opening

36,261

Cubic meters of waste disposed

76,156

Containers disposed in the underground



WIPP had a planned maintenance shutdown earlier this month. Above, Mike Nunley (WTS) drilling bolt holes in East-140. See related article in this issue of TRU TeamWorks.

NMED announces new WIPP hearing dates; extended public comment period

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) announced last week that the public hearing scheduled for the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit has been rescheduled from March 29 to May 31 in Carlsbad. The hearing date was changed to allow discussions between the U.S. Department of Energy, NMED, Washington TRU Solutions and others who had requested a hearing. The goal of the discussions is to resolve issues that gave rise to the hearing requests.

The hearing will now convene at 9:00 a.m. on May 31 at the Stevens Inn in Carlsbad, continuing through 5:00 p.m. on June 6. While the majority of the hearing time will be dedicated to technical testimony, time has also been allotted for non-technical oral comments. They will be heard daily (except June 4) in Carlsbad at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., and at 7:00 p.m. on May 31, June 1, 2 and 3. The hearing will recess at 5:00 p.m. on June 6 and reconvene in Santa Fe on June 7, at the Santa Fe Community College Board Room (Room 223). It will then continue through June 9 or until all persons have been given adequate opportunity to present comments. Oral non-technical testimony will be taken on June 7 at 6:00 p.m., and on June 8 and 9 at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Additionally, the public comment period has been extended until the close of the public hearing. Written comments should be addressed to Mr. James P. Bearzi, NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505; faxed to (505) 428-2567; or e-mailed to james.bearzi@state.nm.us.

NMED will publish an additional public notice announcing pertinent information concerning the WIPP public hearing. This information will be available on NMED's WIPP Web page at www.nmenv.state.nm.us/wipp. The proposed permit modification and detailed fact sheet is also available at the above Web page.

David Kessel named to top SNL-CPG post

David S. Kessel has been selected as senior manager of Sandia National Laboratories Carlsbad Programs Group.

He has served in a variety of positions since joining Sandia over 25 years ago. For the past 14 years he has supported WIPP and the Yucca Mountain project in field testing, laboratory research and performance assessments.



During this period, he served as both a department manager for Performance Assessment and acting programs group manager in Carlsbad. He successfully managed the performance assessment for the first EPA recertification of WIPP and the geotechnical characterization activities supporting the construction of the underground Exploratory Studies Facility at Yucca Mountain.

Blood Drive

Only one in twenty people regularly give blood. For every person in need of blood, the simple act of giving is heroic.

Give blood! Be a hero!

April 4

Skeen-Whitlock Building
(Weart Auditorium)
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

April 5

WIPP Site
(Guard & Security Building
Auditorium)
7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please call Mary Williams at
Ext. 8997 to make a reservation.

Kessel has technical experience with nuclear waste disposal programs and nuclear weapons test programs and has also managed complex projects under rigorous quality assurance and regulatory requirements.

He holds a bachelor of science degree in bioengineering and a master's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Michigan.

Kessel and his wife, Rene, have lived in Carlsbad for the past six years. They have three children. He is currently the Boy Scouts Cubmaster of Pack 276 and serves on the board of directors for the Carlsbad Department of Development. His wife is also involved in the community, including president of the Assistance League of Carlsbad and a member of the Child Conservation League.

Submitted by: Sandia National Laboratories

WIPP turns 7



On March 26, WIPP will mark seven years of safe operations. Do you remember where you were at 4:00 a.m. on March 26, 1999? Since then, legacy TRU waste has been cleaned up from 13 sites, including the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site near Denver, Colo.

WIPP received zero, zip, nada waste shipments the week of March 11 ... and weather wasn't to blame

Ordinarily it would be bad news if a week passed with no waste shipments to WIPP, particularly after a record-setting 33 shipments in one week in February. But shipments were halted for another important schedule: March 11 through 19 was set aside for a maintenance shutdown.



Wes McCarty (WTS) bolting for mats in East-140 around South-450 during last week's maintenance shutdown.

WTS mining engineer, Dave Sjomeling, wrapped up the nine-day effort: "There were lots of hours, a lot of work and it was all done safely." According to Sjomeling, one of the more delicate operations performed by maintenance crews was realignment of the large steel plates that encircle the salt shaft station area. Due to "salt creep" or natural salt convergence, the one-inch thick, 4'X 4' steel plates that surround the shaft had to be removed and refitted to relieve stress.

While at the salt shaft, crews mucked up the sump or spill pocket (a 150-foot-deep opening beneath the salt hoist) where small chunks of rock salt fall through the skip and accumulate over time. Cleaning out the spill pocket ensures proper clearance for the skip, which is the primary means of hoisting mined salt to the surface.



While replacing two cable-shoe bolts, Mine Ops crews installed a low profile "horn and stirrup" cable shoe, increasing the Waste Shaft Station clearance height by 6 to 8 inches.

To complete the maintenance checklist, Crews A and B split in half, creating two 10-hour shifts. Crew A Manager David Hernandez said the two crews have completed ground control work in the East-140 drift from South-300 to South-550 and to North-200 – which involved the removal of power cables and ventilation in that segment of

Happy Birthday Wishes!

Lorraine Hensley (WTS)
March 23

Dave Kimbro (CTAC)
March 23

Kay Atwood (WTS)
March 24

Raquel Acosta (WTS)
March 26

Steve Davis (SNL)
March 26

Angela Johnson (WTS)
March 28

Gary Strong (WTS)
April 1

Ellen Harkness (WTS)
April 2

Dorothy Thomas (NCI)
April 2

Is your birthday on our list?

Employee birthdays are submitted once and must be re-approved for publication by you every year. Please submit birth dates to the TRU TeamWorks staff at:

TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

the drift, bolting 250-feet of wire mesh to the back (roof), then reinstalling the electrical and ventilation systems. To further bolster the ground support in East-140 between South-1600 and South-1950, additional mats were installed.

Also refurbished was the South-1300 welding shop, where crews fabricate bulkheads. The welding shop back was trimmed to give ample height for storing materials. And finally, crews leveled the floor in Panel 3, compacted it with a metal drag and watered it down. Once the salt sets, the active disposal panel will have a smooth, even surface for waste transporters and other vehicles that support waste emplacement.



Acceptance testing of the new software on the WIPP Waste Information System. Pictured above are (l to r) Chris Luoma (WTS), Dennis Hofer (WTS), Kevin Klingler (InSEI), Dave Kump (WTS), Hortense Nelson (InSEI), Ken Lance (InSEI), Dave Speed (WTS) and Bryant Slater (InSEI).

Software installed for RH waste planning

The WIPP Waste Information System (WWIS) and Packaging Group teams have delivered a major milestone on the road to remote-handled (RH) TRU waste acceptance. The team has installed two new programs on the WWIS servers. The first is the RH TRUCON Maintenance Application (RTMA) package, which results in calculated limits that engineers need to assign required TRUCON codes to waste containers. The other is the RH TRAMPAC evaluation software, which uses the assigned codes to determine if the waste meets the approved limits and may be shipped to WIPP in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)-approved shipping casks.

RH TRUCON codes must be calculated for each package configuration of RH-TRU waste that will be shipped to WIPP. The calculations are complex, but the RTMA package performs them quickly and accurately. These programs streamline the process of determining acceptable shipping parameters for proposed packaging configurations for RH-TRU waste.

To keep the plans for RH-TRU waste acceptance moving ahead, the software was implemented as a demonstration project, ahead of official NRC approval of the RH TRAMPAC. The programs will be changed, if necessary, upon NRC's final approval.

Acceptance testing was conducted last week by InSEI, along with WTS employees from the WWIS, Packaging Group, and other RH support organizations.

Contributing writer: Dave Speed (WTS)

Little bugs, big trouble

They have no budget, no political agenda and they weigh almost nothing, but bugs sure can cause problems at WIPP. Each year around this time, creatures of all sizes begin to emerge after the winter and some of the smallest ones are often unnoticed until they have bitten or stung one of us.

Now they have our attention. Beyond the discomfort caused to the individual involved, the sting or bite can also lead to an OSHA recordable injury. That's likely what happened last week. An employee was treated for what is believed to be symptoms caused by a scorpion sting, resulting in a reset to zero of our count of days without a recordable injury.

The best defense against insect stings and bites is to maintain a cautious eye and avoid contact whenever possible. Here are a few critters to keep a close watch on.

Scorpions

A scorpion can inflict a painful sting using the poison gland at the end of its tail. They can be found on the underside of hiding places, on trees, or in clothing that has been left lying around. Scorpions are attracted to lumber piles, rock piles and cracks and moist places and can occasionally be found inside buildings.

The stings usually produce only moderate reactions in people, but they need to be closely watched for more serious side effects. If swelling and/or pain persists, or if breathing difficulties occur, immediate medical attention is necessary.

Brown Recluse Spiders

Brown Recluse spiders come in various shades of brown, have no fur and their defining characteristic is the violin-shaped mark on the back. They like corners and warm, dark places, which is why they are commonly found inside closets or in other storage areas.

Their bite is distinctive, with a pale center surrounded by purple and then by an area of redness. Often, the bite will cause rotting of the skin.

Black Widow Spiders

Black Widow spiders have a poisonous bite that can be life threatening. They prefer dark, cool places to build their webs and most female black widow spiders will have an hourglass shape on their abdomen. Their bites usually result in nausea and vomiting, but some people can have a more severe allergic reaction. If that happens, seek immediate medical attention.

The U.S. Department of Energy
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](#)

